

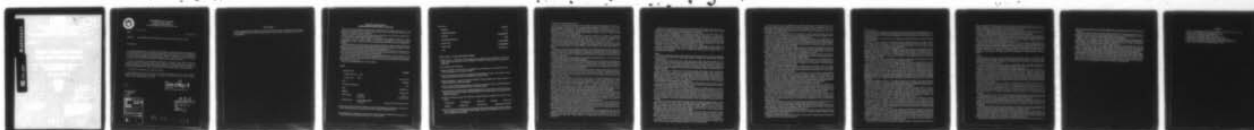
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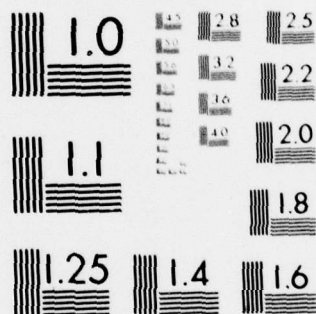
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POLITICAL DIRECTIONS IN FORMER FRENCH (WEST) AFRICAN COLONIES

Recent events in Africa include wars on the Horn of Africa, Zaire, and Angola. Cuban troops have been involved in the fighting and are stationed in other African states. The USSR and China have been competing for influence in Africa for some time.

However, the former French West African states have not been the scene of these more dramatic events. This paper examines in some depth the development of this area.

As a model, two former French colonies are examined in depth (Senegal and the Ivory Coast). Susceptibility to Soviet or Chinese influence is examined but the emphasis is on their own political development and policies. The history of their elites and institutions both before and after independence is examined.

Some comparisons will be drawn with the former British and Portuguese colonies. Some generalizations can be drawn that may be useful in determining what factors are likely to change the dynamics of foreign influence in these countries and other African countries with a colonial history.

Chinese influence in these countries is generally weak. USSR influence is somewhat stronger; however, neither country has made substantial moves toward Communist states despite the fact that their leaders were exposed to French Communists during the colonial period.

The choice of Senegal and the Ivory Coast from among the former French colonies was based in part on their relative prosperity. These countries have demonstrated their ability for sustained economic growth from a modest base. As such, they represent a model for other former colonial nations where economic development is a pressing need.

Basic facts about Senegal and the Ivory Coast include:

Senegal

Population 1976		5,100,000
Urban portion ('71)	32%	
Literacy ('73)	10%	In school 27%
GNP		\$1,500,000
Per Capita 1974 Income		\$274
Area		76,000 sq. mi.
Religion		Moslem 90%
Ethnic groups:	Wolf 36% Serer 16.5%	Peuhl 17.5 Toucoulear 9%
Political Leader:	Leopold Sedar Senghor 71 years old	Re-elected for 5 years February 1978

Economy diversified with 30% of GNP from commerce, 28% agriculture (half peanuts), 15% government, 12% manufacturing. Trade with France, PRC, Cambodia, Portugal and USA.

Since independence, discouraging economic reverses have beset Senegal. Independence removed much of the French-speaking economic hinterland from its economic sphere.

Ivory Coast

Population	7,000,000
Urban (1975 estimate)	8%
GNP 1975	\$3,800,000,000
Per Capita 1974 Income	\$600
Exports 1976	\$1,631,000,000
Imports 1976	\$1,296,000,000
Area	127,500 sq. mi.

Political Leader — President Felix Houphouet-Boigny

Principal Activity — Agriculture, coffee, cocoa and forest products. New development of cotton and sugar. Some large scale farms but most farming is in the hands of African planters with modest scale plantations.

Close commercial links with France.

Currency convertible to French franc at advantageous rate. Average rate of real economic growth — 7.8%. Encourages entry of overseas investment.

French origin population has increased to approximately 60,000 people; however, some attempt is being made to curtail growth and there is some agitation to send French home.

President Houphouet is trying to form defensive alliance of French-speaking West African countries to blunt leftist influence of Libya and Algeria.

Off-shore oil finds and light manufacturing meet a portion of the nation's needs. Over 2MM immigrants have moved from the poorer nations of Upper Volta, Mali and Chad.

President Houphouet endorsed President Giscard d'Estaing's plan for reconciliation with President Toure of Guinea who broke with France in 1958 and adopted pro-Communist policies. Guinea opposes any Algerian expansionism.

One-third of foreign aid comes from France and a 500-man military contingent from France is in the country.

Ethnic groups:	Some 80 groups	Baule 23 %	Bete 18%	Senufo 15%
Religion:	Moslem 25%	Christians 12%	Balance largely Animists	

Western development model featuring State coordination of fiscal and development planning, competitive private enterprise and favorable investment climate following recommendations made by the International Monetary Fund in 1960.

The Specifics of Colonial Administration.

During the colonial administration there was a struggle for power between Europeans and Africans. However, among the Africans there was a struggle between modernizers who believed in social equality and traditionalists who believed in social distinctions based on heredity. Tribal loyalties reinforced the traditionalists' view. The modernizers saw the traditionalists as supporters of the colonial administrations. This was characterized as having "grafted modern abuses on ancient injustice." Therefore, being anticolonial was equated with being antichief.

However, the view among educated Africans was much less positive on the question of assimilation which was the policy of the pre-World War II French left. In their eyes the policy assumed that the Africans had no civilization while France alone had culture. Their education in colonial schools emphasized unacceptable concepts such as textbooks that spoke of "our ancestors, the Gauls."

The reaction was to develop an interest in African culture which became almost a preoccupation. More than their English-speaking West African neighbors, French-speaking West Africans have persistently emphasized developing their own cultural tradition. Interest in African culture runs as high as interest in politics.

However, the status conferred on Africans by education in colonial schools and universities caused them to seek privileges from the French administrators. They used the assimilation policy to their advantage in arguing for equal rights between Frenchmen and themselves, the African elite. French Socialists and Communists came to the colonies as administrators and convinced some that equality between Frenchmen and Africans was possible.

This may explain why postwar demands did not explicitly include independence as a primary goal until 1957 as they did among their English-speaking neighbors.

There were three general areas in Africa where political associations were formed prior to independence: the colonial universities, the civil service and the Communist party. In addition, students studying in France developed associations at the university with each other and with a range of Communist and Socialist organizations. It is clear that these organizations recognized the potential influence these students could play in African development and sought them out.

In the colonial universities, people from many French-African countries shared common experiences especially at the University at Ponty. Parties unified across colonial boundaries, and graduates ultimately became national leaders. Lower state schools also fostered African values as against ethnic values. Graduates of these lower schools made good use of the time other potential leaders were away at Ponty to establish themselves locally.

French Communists taught in Ponty and the other schools and worked throughout the colonial administrations. They won the trust of Africans by their behavior as friends, rather than superiors. Their political thinking was attractive to Africans who had little access to any acceptable alternative political education. A party, Groupes d'Etudes Communistes (GEC), was formed in several African countries in the early 1940's. This was not a true Communist party as it sought as members elites rather than the masses. By providing opportunities for travel, it increased awareness of international events as well as enhanced a sense of mission to lead the masses. The Communists encouraged scattered groups to unify under a single national antiimperialist front called Rassemblement Democratique Africain (RDA):

However, in pursuit of short-range goals, the Communists paved the way for separation of African Communists from the party in France. They encouraged working within the French constitutional system until Communists took power in France which indicated to Africans that French party objectives were more important than African party objectives. They also imported French political rivalries to people struggling to achieve unity in an area beset with tribal and other divisions. In addition, their connection with Communist figures caused Africans problems with colonial administrators.

The liberation in France during World War II sparked political reform in the colonies. Elections were held and mass parties developed. Educated Africans were in a better position to achieve political power than were the traditional chiefs. In fact, the colonial administration had already weakened these figures. The elections in the various countries took place in the same time frames so that countries that were not as politically advanced were caught up in the wave of political change.

The constitution of the Fourth Republic of France provided for African representation in the French legislature. Elections were held to appoint territorial assemblies with voting eligibility limited. While this provided some Africans with political experience in France, the French assembly took little interest in colonial questions until 1954. "Tough" governors were appointed in many territories and unrest was widespread.

In 1954 France was defeated in Vietnam and a more liberal regime under Mendes-France opened the way to autonomy and spelled the end of assimilation policies. Government policy became one of finding legitimate outlets for West African pressures in favor of self-government.

In order to prevent independence, the Federation of French African States, the AOF (Afrique Occidentale Française), was dissolved to allow territorial autonomy as an alternative to independence. With the formation of the Fifth Republic in 1958 in France, De Gaulle attempted to retain control of key areas in the emerging colonies, such as defense, foreign policy, currency, etc. He used economic aid as the carrot. He did perceive that if offered the opportunity for peaceful right of separation, there was a better opportunity to retain association with France as the British did with the Commonwealth concept. He announced the French acceptance of the concept in his 1958 tour of Africa.²

However, when Guinea rejected French economic aid for independence, French resistance to independence collapsed shortly thereafter. In fact, French policy became identical to British policy at the end. Rather than independence, they strove to convince the African states to become a part of a Commonwealth à la Française.

Senegal.

French rule in Senegal dates back to the 17th Century. There were more schools for Africans established before those in other colonies, and Senegal had a surplus of educated and trained Africans spanning several generations.

Political parties developed along social, rather than tribal or ethnic lines. Party leaders were civil servants, professionals or peanut traders, long the most important industry. Dakar was the former capital of the AOF Federation where cultural and political life was most highly developed. Senegal is a comparatively rich country with a higher proportion of the people in the towns than the countryside and the largest percentage of wage earners in West Africa so that significant numbers of people participate in the money economy.

Prior to World War II, Africans born in four coastal communes were called "citizens" and elected a parliament. The citizens, accounting for 2-3 percent of the population of Senegal, were governed in civil matters by their Muslim tradition and enjoyed rights almost the same as Frenchmen. Their civil rights were greater than the "subjects," who were required to endure forced labor and the like. They had access to French education at Ponty and other Lycees. They valued French culture and eagerly sought favors from the European administration. A party with socialist connections, Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (SIFO) was formed among the privileged citizens.

The "citizens" lost their legal privileges during the Vichy administration and encountered systematic discrimination and segregation. Despite these problems, African students at Ponty asked for arms to fight the Germans. African soldiers fought on the side of De Gaulle.

After the Second World War, there was a burst of political activity in Senegal and talk of a union of French West African colonies. Of the many political groups, SIFO had the best organization and won local elections. The distinction between citizens and subjects seemed to fade. However, resentment grew among the citizen group competing for favors from French administrators. Enthusiasm for union waned and economic difficulties arose. The SIFO leaders did not expand their membership enough to take advantage of the wider electorate and post war reforms they helped to bring about. Falling peanut prices created rural problems and added to the discontent. Regional associations arose that divided the country and strikes were held.

The energies of France were dissipated when deep divisions developed between Communists in total opposition to all non-Communists. A party called Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais (BDS) split off from the SIFO and established ties with the Mouvement Républicain Populaire (MRP) in France. Their theme emphasized African culture and values but it gave support to French union. They took steps to broaden participation in party affairs by activating regional, religious and ethnic groups. They expressed regional grievances and sought improvement in the status of "subjects."

The BDS was helped in 1951 when the size of the electorate more than tripled and the balance shifted from the towns to rural provinces. Leopold Sedar Senghor dominated the party. The party's electoral results were followed by a rise in peanut prices bid up along with other commodities during the Korean War. The BDS position became so strong that the party won 76 percent of the votes cast in 1956 elections.

However, younger university graduates returning from France developed independent associations and many wished to move on to concepts other than division between subjects and citizens. Trade union and student groups remained outside the BDS and the SIFO. Leftists criticized the BDS.

After their election success, the BDS moved to embrace these groups. The process of fusion was enhanced by themes of African unity and for the end of colonial rule. They were repelled by the idea of participating in the French Parliament and the French war against Algerians. Young intellectuals and young Turks in the old BDS structure sought fusion of all the parties based on administrative, trade union and cultural autonomy from France.

Through a series of mergers followed by the splitting off of leftist and other parties from their connections in France, the Senegalese parties were reorganized as the Union Progressiste Senegalaise (UPS). Young men of the towns once again set the political tone of Senegalese life.

However, the divergent interests of the young intellectuals led to a split in late 1958, against the background of the end of the Fourth Republic in France. Senegal and Sudan joined in the Mali Federation in June 1959. The Federation collapsed two months later when Senegal withdrew after the elites in Senegal and the Sudan diverged on basic political questions. Senegal became an autonomous republic within the community with Senghor as president in June 1960.

However, Senegal had much to gain from federation as it assured assistance in maintaining port facilities in Dakar, supported the Dakar-Bamako (in Mali) railroad and provided employment for the growing number of educated Senegalese. However, there was thinking that the Common Market would force France to drop support for the price of peanuts even if independence was rejected.

Independence came to Senegal in 1960 against the background of economic problems, division among West African states and political divisions within Senegal. Despite the economic lead Senegal had during the colonial era, economic progress was held back in the early 1960's.

The first republic of Senegal lasted until 1962. Authority was divided between the President (head of state) on one hand and the Prime Minister (head of government) on the other. In the second republic, after President Senghor won re-election with the slogan "a single hat on a single head," the formal political system was transformed into a presidential regime.

Severe disturbances began in 1968 when students at Dakar University, and later, workers in the trade unions agitated for reforms. In February 1970 the voters approved a new constitution. The new regime created the post of prime minister and brought younger technocrats and union leaders into a new cabinet. Senghor remained the dominant political figure.

Senegal was not only a participant but one of the initiators of the association of French-speaking African States that coordinates economic, technical and cultural interests. A specialized agency, the Organization Africaine et Malgache de Cooperation Economique (OAMCE) was formed in 1961. This evolved into Commune Africaine et Malgache (OCAM). Despite organizational changes and political problems the group has coordinated an airline (Air Afrique), communications, and agricultural policies and has worked with the European Economic Community and agencies of the United Nations.

Senegal co-sponsored with India a UNCTAD conference in New Delhi in early 1968.

Senegal recognized the People's Republic of China in 1971. They did not support the US Resolution in the United Nations calling for the expulsion of Taiwan, an important measure requiring a two-thirds vote of the Assembly which paved the way for admission of the People's Republic. This rapprochement took place despite expulsion of Chinese correspondents in 1968 for alleged troublemaking with students. There are also reports of a splinter pro-Chinese group of a party (PAI) that may have subversive intent.³

The Soviet Union has criticized Senegal for serving the interests of foreign capital. However, under Krushchev in 1964 a Soviet credit of \$6.7MM was committed to Senegal. Its principal feature was the construction of a tuna fish processing plant. This plant was never completed; however, two fishing boats were provided by the Soviet Union. This was the Soviet's first aid agreement with a nonrevolutionary regime in West Africa.

Modest trade was initiated by the Soviet Union which served to broaden contact. Cultural relations were established and the Soviet Union participated in Senegal's 1966 "World Festival of Negro Arts."

Soviet trawlers use port facilities at Dakar and refrigeration facilities for their products. The Bamako-Dakar Railroad is a conduit for their shipments of Mali. Also Dakar became a vital link in airline routes from the East Block to Latin America and other African countries.

The new agreements signed with Senegal in 1974 provided for the transfer of the military base at Dakar to Senegalese control and withdrawal of many French troops. In May 1974 Senghor publically charged France with "losing interest in Africa."

Relations with Arab countries became closer. They, of course, share the Moslem religion. Senegal broke off diplomatic relations with Israel in October 1973.

The Ivory Coast.

The end of World War II found the Ivory Coast in political turmoil. The country was agricultural then as it is today. However, immigrant French planters were favored by a succession of French administrators over the African planters. They were discriminated against economically despite their large numbers and broad-based voting.

These African planters took the initiative in building the Rassemblement Democratique African (RDA) party after the War.

The Ivory Coast has a long history of exporting a range of agricultural products, principally coffee, cocoa, bananas, wood and palm oil. The many small African plantations spread the money economy across a broad range of the population. In fact, the educated elite kept roots in the countryside which tended to reduce rivalry between traditional and modern elites.

The agricultural bounty attracted many immigrants. In 1955 an estimate was that 60 different tribes made up the population. In addition to planters and agricultural workers, a heterogeneous group of middlemen trade and transport goods. The interests of these African traders were closely tied with the African planters but they were also subject to discrimination by French authorities in favor of European, Lebanese and Syrian middlemen. It is important to note that on a per capita basis the Ivory Coast passed Senegal in GDP in the 1950's.

The principal cities, Abidjan and Bouake, were centers of contact but the preponderance of wage earners was in the countryside working on farms, in forests and in fisheries.

In a setting of rapid social and political change, Africans united to seek equal treatment. The first territorial election in 1945 was won by Felix Houphouet-Boigny. In Paris he successfully sponsored a law ending forced labor. The Parti Democratique de la Cote Ivoire (PDCI) party consolidated its position by seeking broad representation from different tribal, geographical and professional groups. However, tensions with Europeans became acute. About the same time the RDA was formed and reforms were adopted in the French Parliament. While associated with French Communists, the RDA captured popular enthusiasm for the idea of real change. When Communists were removed from participation in French Government in 1947, French officials moved to reduce RDA influence even at the risk of incidents. Repressive measures, threats, and the firings of chiefs and civil servants who were associated with the RDA followed for several years. The RDA decided to fight back, which led to demonstrations, boycotts, strikes and rioting.

Houphouet negotiated in Paris for a reduction in repression on the basis of removing Communist influence from the RDA. The transition was awkward because tensions were high but the repressive French Governor was transferred in 1950. Remaining officials falsified elections held in 1951. However this was the final official repression of the PDCI, the Ivory Coast party of the RDA.

The end of the incidents marked a complete change in the position of European settlers. The African planters and their PDCI had won. However, they chose to cooperate with French economic interests. African planters came to dominate agriculture and French interests turned to other areas often with PDCI planters and traders in their management. Social relations improved and racial discriminations were reduced. The European settlers accepted the PDCI which remained party dominated by Africans. The PDCI proceeded on a determined policy of cooperation with European residents.

After the repression and the incidents, the party was able to get on with consolidating its position. However, party divisions appeared among the heterogeneous population. The repression itself had encouraged divisiveness. Leadership was weak or nonexistent at the local level. The semblance of unity behind the PDCI was more apparent than real while President Houphouet and other leaders turned their attention to development. Education, health, and social services were improved during high agricultural prices in the Korean War. The point of independence was not pressed and cooperation with France resulted in new capital being invested in the country.

Workers and newly-educated university graduates chafed under Houphouet's domination and tribalism remained a problem. The Ivory Coast opposed the AOF Federation (Afrique Occidentale Francaise) which they perceived as taking resources from the country and potentially opening their area to divisive elements. When President Houphouet became disenchanted with Franco-African cooperation, he briskly took leave of France in 1960. Unity increased with independence. The new country emphasized development. However, problems associated with a heterogeneous population remain. There is an obvious difficulty in succession after Houphouet who holds party and state together.

At the time the Ivory Coast became independent, the Soviet leaders were generally optimistic about their

ability to influence newly-emerging African states. However, they saw the Ivory Coast and its leader, Houphouet-Boigny, as the personification of neocolonialism. Soviet officials despised Houphouet from the day he led the RDA out of its alliance with the French Communist Party.

However, by 1966, under Krushchev's policy of increasing connections with nonrevolutionary states, contacts were established and full diplomatic relations initiated in January of 1967. But the Soviet Union was unable to establish confidence and the Ivory Coast severed relations in May of 1969.

In 1974 Premier John Vorster of South Africa visited the Ivory Coast for talks. President Houphouet took a strong stand in favor of a "dialogue" by Black African states and South Africa that might open a way for change in apartheid. While terming the system "revolting," President Houphouet called it an affliction for which white South Africans needed to find a cure.⁴

China provided military training to Nationals of the Ivory Coast in the late 1960's. In 1964 an agreement between Red China and Nkrumah's Ghana government was reached. A guerrilla training camp and Ideological Institute was formed and supplied with willing recruits by Chinese missions in the Ivory Coast and other independent African states. Fortunately, this "Operation Green Mamba" collapsed along with Nkrumah's other initiatives.⁵ However, in a continent beset with tribal, ethnic and other rivalries in virtually every state, this type of foreign aid has obvious implications of substantial concern to African leaders.

Analysis.

In both Senegal and the Ivory Coast, political directions bear the stamp of their leaders. Both Houphouet-Boigny and Senghor have been the most important political figures in their nations since independence in the early 1960's. During the first formative years "on their own" they played a leading role in shaping their countries' direction.

It can be reasonably expected that the successor to each leader, once established, will imprint his personality on the subsequent political directions in Senegal and the Ivory Coast. Nevertheless there are some conclusions that can be drawn on the likely thrust of their foreign policy.

Perhaps the most likely course is that directions will be shaped by ideology and economic considerations. *In ideology, it seems likely that any pattern must conform to the idea of "Negritude" which Leopold Senghor sees as "the whole complex of civilized values—cultural, economic, social and political—which characterize the black peoples, or, more precisely, the Negro African world."* While it may be difficult to accurately describe exactly the form this may take, the self-identity developed during independence and before make it difficult for Africans to accept Marxist Lennist assumptions about the individual and collective behavior. This also makes it difficult to infuse the new African sense of self-identity with this aspect of Communist thought.

Of course, Africans are sensitive to the charge of "neocolonialism." Until Cuba became involved in Angola and the difficulties on the horn of Africa, no Communist state had ever been a power in Africa. However, it is not as easy for Communist states to use anticolonial sentiment among Africans as it was in the era immediately after independence. In order to be successful then, Soviet or Chinese initiatives may adopt policies that exclude a demand for conformance to their ideologies and anti-Western actions. The only other alternative is to promote and support revolutionary movements of whatever ideological persuasion.

While Senegal and the Ivory Coast are more advanced economically than many African states, their overwhelming need and interest is for economic development and diversification. There is every reason to expect that the search for economic advancement will retain the highest political priority.

From time to time, both the USSR and China have made effective use of assistance and trade. Elites in Senegal have long been familiar with the Communist model of economic development. However, the natural market for African products is Western Europe. In the case of Senegal, the franc zone of France is predominant.

France has been willing to extend economic assistance in Western Africa in return for influence. The West and the Moslem Arab states then have greater capacity for assisting economic development which can reinforce important ties in religion, language and cultural areas to Western Africa.

There are some general predictions that can be made about Senegal, particularly after Senghor. The objectives and general orientation will be similar. Their dependence on the outside world and on France in particular is likely to remain. They will continue to seek regional rather than continental cooperation to maintain the economic and leadership role they have played since colonial times.

The replacement of Senghor may well increase internal tensions and will be likely to result in a shift to

the left. Senghor has forced out of office other political figures and younger technocrats yearn for greater influence.

The military forces seem likely to remain an important political force. They played an important role in supporting the republic from Portuguese intrusions and are part of the peacekeeping force in North Lebanon which shows their ability to support and therefore influence the state.

Senegal is likely to continue to be a leading advocate of respecting the newly acquired political sovereignty and territorial integrity of African states.⁴ In many cases these boundaries bear little relation to ethnic, cultural or even geographic realities. However, French West Africa is conscious of the idea that drastic changes tend to invite ever greater difficulties than already exist.

In the post-Senghor era there is every reason to expect that Soviet or Chinese initiatives will be well received if they are able to adjust to the realities already outlined. However, the Soviet Union has had difficulty in maintaining its interest, particularly in West Africa when the needs are for overcoming the restraints of tradition, generating capital to modernize and raising the efficiency of local organizations.⁵

It is too early to conclude how the Cuban involvement and presence in Libya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Angola and Mozambique will be perceived in West Africa, particularly the support Cubans receive from the Soviet Union. While it is clear that the only way that Cuba can support these initiatives is with help from the Soviet Union, it is not clear what followup the Soviets contemplate. However, it seems clear that countries such as the Ivory Coast and Senegal will have reason for concern and may become even more disposed to exploring closer security arrangements with France, and perhaps other western states.

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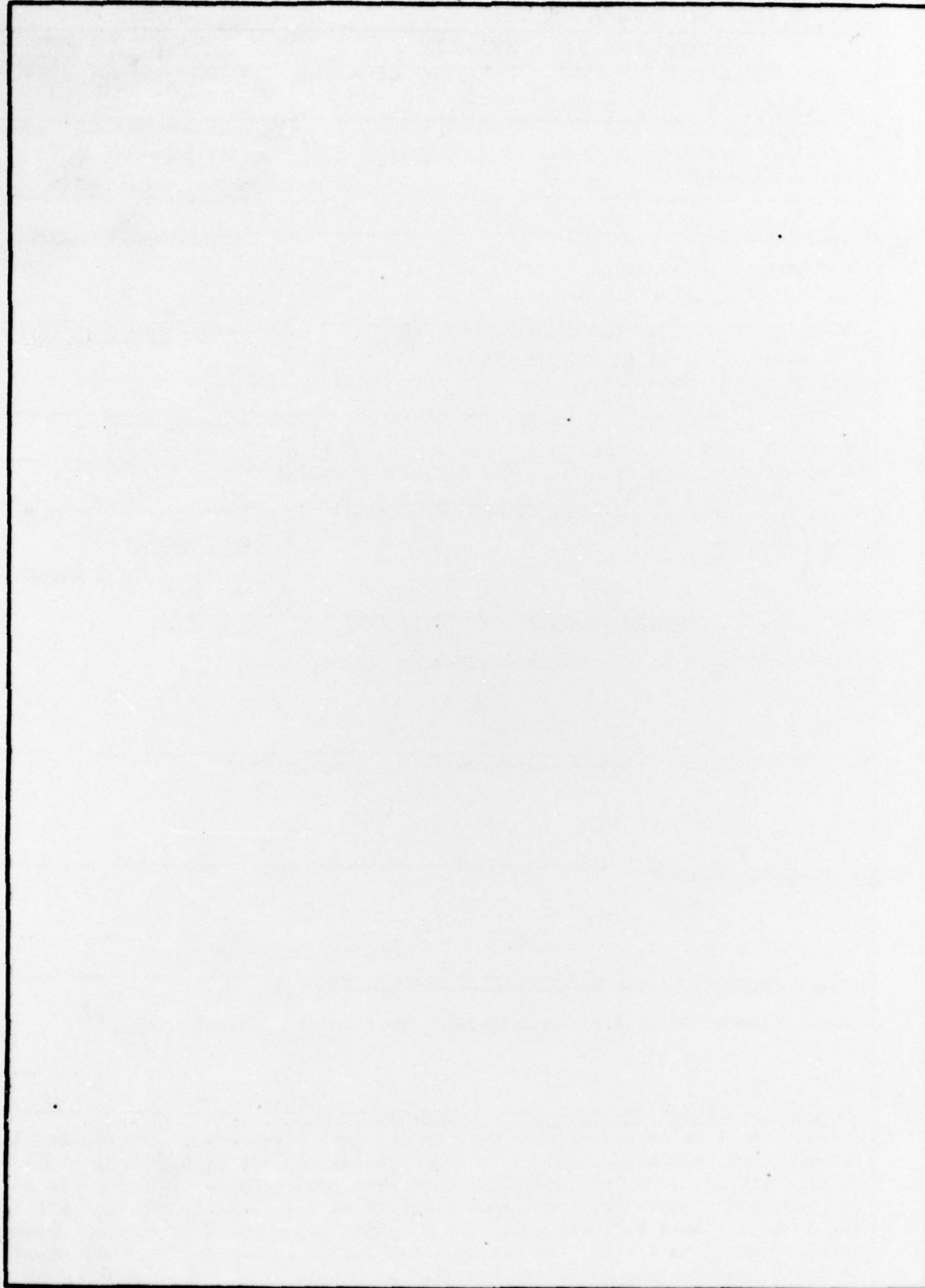
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